

1 A RESOLUTION urging Governor Matthew Bevin to declare a state of emergency
2 in Martin County, Kentucky, and to make emergency funds available to resolve the
3 county's water crisis.

4 WHEREAS, water is a fundamental human necessity, as each person requires at
5 least 20 liters of clean, safe water every day for drinking, cooking, and maintaining
6 healthy personal hygiene; and

7 WHEREAS, the Martin County Water District is responsible for providing a
8 reliable supply of clean water to the approximately 12,000 residents of Martin County,
9 but is currently in danger of total collapse as the physical infrastructure and the financial
10 condition of the district are in serious need of assistance; and

11 WHEREAS, much of the dilapidated and malfunctioning infrastructure that spreads
12 across the mountainous terrain of Martin County is at least 40 years old; and

13 WHEREAS, the Martin County Water District's aging and leaking infrastructure is
14 to blame for a water loss rate of approximately 70 percent in 2018, which is nearly five
15 times the recommended maximum loss rate; and

16 WHEREAS, the Martin County Water District has been referred to by a member of
17 the Kentucky Public Service Commission as "the worst district in the state"; and

18 WHEREAS, the Martin County Water District, on more than one occasion, shut off
19 the water supply to its residents for one week or longer in 2018; and

20 WHEREAS, the Martin County Water District has issued numerous boil water
21 advisories in multiple areas in the first two months of 2019 alone due to damaged water
22 lines across the county; and

23 WHEREAS, the residents of Martin County have experienced numerous instances
24 of contaminated, discolored, or otherwise unclean tap water over a period of at least three
25 years; and

26 WHEREAS, when clean water from the Martin County Water District is either
27 unavailable or insufficient, the process of acquiring clean, potable water for daily use is

1 both time-consuming and costly for residents; and

2 WHEREAS, due to a variety of factors including a decrease in customers and an
3 increase in utility costs to repair failing infrastructure, the Martin County Water District
4 consistently incurs monthly expenses that exceed revenues; and

5 WHEREAS, the Martin County Water District, as of November 2018, is carrying
6 approximately \$1.1 million in debt that it is unable to pay; and

7 WHEREAS, the Martin County Water District has at times, due to its financial
8 condition, operated on a cash-only basis with its vendors, which makes purchasing
9 expensive infrastructure components nearly impossible; and

10 WHEREAS, the Martin County Water District's unsustainable financial situation
11 jeopardizes not only its ability to meet its payroll, power, and debt obligations, but also its
12 ability to make the long overdue infrastructure repairs; and

13 WHEREAS, the Martin County Water District requested and received multiple
14 permanent water rate increases in 2018 for all of its customers, many of whom cannot
15 afford such a financial burden; and

16 WHEREAS, the average water bill for Martin County Water District customers has
17 increased by approximately 44 percent since early 2018; and

18 WHEREAS, the Martin County Water District's financial condition is such that, if
19 unresolved, residents of Martin County will likely face additional extended periods of
20 time without clean water; and

21 WHEREAS, based on the severity of the physical infrastructure deficiencies and the
22 imminent financial collapse of the Martin County Water District, it is necessary for the
23 government of the Commonwealth of Kentucky to intercede in order to protect the health,
24 safety, and welfare of the residents of Martin County;

25 NOW, THEREFORE,

26 ***Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the***
27 ***Commonwealth of Kentucky:***

1 ➔Section 1. The House of Representatives urges Governor Matthew Bevin to
2 declare a state of emergency for Martin County, Kentucky, as it relates to the chronic
3 shortage of safe and potable water.

4 ➔Section 2. The House of Representatives urges Governor Matthew Bevin to
5 make emergency funds available to improve the Martin County Water District's dire
6 financial and operational conditions to ensure that Martin County residents have a steady,
7 reliable supply of clean water in the future.

8 ➔Section 3. The Clerk of the House of Representatives shall send a copy of this
9 Resolution and notification of its adoption to Governor Matthew Bevin, 700 Capital
10 Avenue Suite 100, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601.